

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 SCS-06 CA-01 PPT-01 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 PC-01 AID-05 /083 W
-----087560 130358Z /15

R 121010Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2264
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, CASC, MI, ZA
SUBJECT: STATUS OF MALAWI-ZAMBIAN LAND BORDER

REF: (A) LILONGWE 1414, (B) LILONGWE 1403

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: ON SEPTEMBER 8 GOM OFFICIALLY AND
EMPHATICALLY DENIED REPORTS THAT THE LAND BORDER BETWEEN
MALAWI AND ZAMBIA WAS CLOSED, FOLLOWING REPORTS ON THE
ALLEGED BORDER CLOSING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NEWS MEDIA.
ACCORDING TO SAG EMBASSY HERE, SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA CITED
TENSION BETWEEN MALAWI AND ZAMBIA AS A RESULT OF ZAMBIA'S
EXPULSION OF A REPORTED 3,500 ILLEGAL ALIENS FROM ZAMBIA,
INCLUDING SEVERAL HUNDRED MALAWIANS, AS THE REASON FOR
THE REPORTED BORDER CLOSURE.

2. EDITORIAL COMMENT IN SEPT. 11 MALAWI DAILY TIMES
AND ON MALAWI RADIO CHARACTERIZED THE FOREIGN PRESS
REPORTS AS QUOTE AN ATTEMPT TO SOW SEEDS OF DISCORD
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UNQUOTE BETWEEN MALAWI AND ZAMBIA. THE ARTICLE EMPHASIZED
THAT NO TENSION EXISTS BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS OVER
THE ALIEN EXPULSION OR ANYTHING ELSE.
FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WERE BLAMED FOR THIS QUOTE MALICIOUS
FABRICATION UNQUOTE. (SAG EMBASSY SOURCE REPORTED THAT A SOUTH
AFRICAN JOURNALIST HAD BEEN IN MALAWI LAST WEEK WITH GOM
PERMISSION). END UNCLASSIFIED.

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3. COMMENT:

THE INCIDENT HAS APPARENTLY CAUSED A BIG FLAP AT HIGH LEVELS OF THE GOM. THE EMBASSY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THAT MALAWI BORDER POLICE HAVE AT LEAST TIGHTENED ENFORCEMENT OF ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS AT THE ZAMBIAN BORDER IN THE LAST TEN DAYS. SECURITY PRECAUTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH PRESIDENT BANDA'S VISIT TO THE CENTRAL

REGION ARE A MORE PLAUSIBLE EXPLANATION THAN TENSION OVER ZAMBIA'S EXPULSION OF ALIENS. A SOURCE AT THE ZAMBIAN HIGH COMMISSION REPORTED LAST WEEK THAT THE REPATRIATIONS OF ILLEGAL MALAWIANS FROM ZAMBIA HAD PROCEEDED WITH GOOD COOPERATION FROM MALAWIAN AUTHORITIES.

4. THE HANDLING OF THIS AFFAIR DEMONSTRATES GOM'S APPARENT BELIEF THAT IT CAN CONTROL EVENTS AND THE MEDIA. SOMEONE IN THE MALAWI POLICE PROBABLY ISSUED NEW INSTRUCTIONS TO THE BORDER OFFICIALS WITHOUT REGARD TO POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS.

5. IN VIEW OF STRENUOUS GOM DENIAL OF BORDER CLOSURE,
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THE EMBASSY NOW ANTICIPATES NO SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR AMCITS ENTERING MALAWI FROM ZAMBIA BY LAND. TRAVELLERS SHOULD BE ADVISED, HOWEVER, TO ENSURE THAT THEIR PASSPORTS ARE IN ORDER AND TO CARRY PROPER DOCUMENTATION FOR THEIR VEHICLES AND FINANCIAL EVIDENCE THAT THEY CAN ADEQUATELY SUPPORT THEMSELVES WHILE IN MALAWI.
SHEINBAUM

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NNN

Message Attributes

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